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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

State Department review completed

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12 May 1971

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Approved For Release 2003/08/21 : CIA-RDP79T00975A019000050002-4

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FINLAND: Leaders of the liberal majority in the Finnish Communist Party (SKP) have resumed public struggle with the Stalinist minority.

The liberals have interpreted cryptic remarks made last month by Soviet party ideologue Suslov to representatives of the two factions attending the CPSU congress as a clear endorsement for party chairman Saarinen, a liberal. They are using Suslov's remarks as a mandate for proceeding against the Stalinists. Some members of the majority faction, however, have urged the leadership to avoid a humiliation of the Stalinists so harsh that it might provoke Soviet intervention in the Finnish dispute.

Even prior to the liberals' change of tactics, the crisis within the SKP had already spilled over into its political front, the People's Democratic League (SKDL), its youth and women's groups, the labor movement, and other organizations. The Stalinists, encouraged by earlier liberal passivity, have pursued disruptive, sometimes even violent tactics, gaining considerable publicity in the process.

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With the collapse of the facade of party unity erected at Soviet insistence early last year, both sides are fighting even harder to influence domestic fence-sitters and the officially neutral CPSU. For the first time competing Communist May Day events were scheduled in several localities by both sides. The speeches of the liberals denounced "left sectarianism"; the Stalinists attacked "right revisionism." These disputes have received extensive play in the non-Communist Finnish press.

The liberals have shown greater enthusiasm for an open fight than at any time in the past two years, but they still must cope with support extended the

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Stalinists by Soviet party circles. This support was most recently expressed by Pravda's replay of a Stalinist press item denouncing "right revisionism" in Finland. However the struggle develops, the fight between the two factions can be expected to intensify as next spring's party congress draws closer.

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BERLIN: A top-level West German official has put forward new views on the Berlin talks and Ost-politik in the wake of recent leadership changes in Pankow.

In a conversation with US Minister Klein on 7 May, Egon Bahr, Chancellor Brandt's chief foreign policy adviser, argued that the Four Power talks on Berlin may move more easily because Ulbricht's successor, Honecker, wields less influence in Moscow. He also said that Honecker was in a weak position domestically and this might lead to a less tractable East German position in the parallel Bahr-Kohl talks on inner-German issues.

On these assumptions, Bahr suggested that the Western Allies, in their negotiations with the Soviets, should press for the inclusion of considerable detail on such issues as Berlin access. Soviet agreement on details, he implied, would undercut East Germany's ability to prolong or deadlock the Bahr-Kohl talks.

Bahr's proposal, which he may hope to pursue in private with Assistant Secretary Hillenbrand prior to the upcoming meeting of senior allied representatives in London, represents a sharp departure from his position only a few months ago. At that time he urged seeking Soviet agreement to a simple "umbrella" formula, delegating the working out of detailed aspects of access to the Bahr-Kohl forum.

There is no evidence so far supporting Bahr's supposition that Ulbricht's departure is affecting the Soviet - East German negotiating position. In public statements since Ulbricht's retirement was announced on 3 May, Soviet and East German leaders have been at pains to portray their complete unanimity, and East German propaganda toward West Germany has been even more hostile than before Honecker's accession to power. Moreover, at the last Four Power ambassadorial meeting on 7 May, Ambassador Abrasimov showed no inclination to make substantive concessions.

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Bahr's proposal, coupled with the reiteration of his assertion that there are "positive elements" in the Soviet draft agreement on Berlin, would place greater burdens on the Four Power ambassadors, and would relieve pressure on his talks with East German Deputy Foreign Minister Kohl. Bahr has already expressed concern that the inter-German talks may be nearing an impasse.

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